WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of updating records in databases query results comprising the steps of:

maintaining one or more update databases with a plurality of update records, the update records including at least one indication of whether a record should be excluded from a search result;

searching a database for records responsive to a query and returning database records responsive to the query;

searching an update database associated to the database for records responsive to the query and returning update records responsive to the query; and

excluding from search results database records that correspond to returned update records that include an indication that the record should be excluded from the search.

2. A method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of including in search results an update record that does not include an indication that the record should be excluded from a search.

3. A method as in claim 1, wherein the at least one indication of whether a record should be excluded from a search comprises an at least one field of the update record capable of being set to at least one predefined value.

4. A method as in claim 1, wherein records and update records include a plurality of fields and records and update records correspond when the fields of a record are substantially similar to the fields of an update record.

5. A method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of identifying one or more update databases associated with a database.

6. A method as in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

maintaining a search-routing database, said search-routing database including a plurality of search-routing database records comprising of search-routing database fields, said

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search-routing database fields including a database-identifier field and one or more database fields;

       receiving a first query from a user, said first query comprised of fields of data;

       extracting data from the fields of said first query to form a modified query;

5   searching said search-routing database for records responsive to the modified query, and returning one or more database identifiers;

       routing the first query to the databases identified by said database identifiers and the update databases associated therewith.

10   7.   A system for updating records in databases, comprising:

       a plurality of databases, said databases including database records having database fields;

       one or more update databases, said update databases including update records having update database fields, at least one of the update database fields indicating how to update a

15 record retrieved in a search;

       a search engine for searching one or more of the databases for records responsive to a query and returning database records responsive to the query;

       a search engine for searching one or more update databases associated to the databases for update records responsive to the query and returning update records responsive to the

20 query; and

       a sorter for generating the results from the search of the one or more of the database and update databases, the sorter excluding from the results records that correspond to update records that include an indication that the record should be excluded from the search.

25 8.   A system as in claim 7, wherein the sorter includes in the results update records that do not indicate that the record should be excluded from the search.

  9.   A system as in claim 7, wherein records and update records correspond when the fields of a record are substantially similar to the fields of an update record.

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  10.   A system as in claim 7, further comprising:

a search-routing database, said search-routing database including search-routing database records comprised of search-routing database fields, said search routing database fields including a database-identifier field and one or more of said database fields,

an input device for obtaining a first query from a user, said first query comprised of

5   fields of data;

a search router for receiving the first query and forming a modified query, said modified query comprising a subset of the fields of data contained in the first query;

a search engine for searching said search-routing database for records responsive to the modified query and returning one or more database identifiers, said database identifiers

10   identifying one or more target databases.

11.   A system as in claim 10, further comprising a table for identifying one or more update databases associated with one or more target databases.

15   12.   A method of routing search requests comprising the steps of:

receiving a search request at a first server, the first server having one or more databases accessible for searching;

determining whether the search request should be routed to the one or more databases accessible by the first server or to a second server, the second server having one or more

20   databases accessible for searching;

when the search request is determined that it should be routed to the one or more databases accessible by the first server, routing the search request to the one or more databases accessible by the first server and searching the one or more databases and returning the results of the search;

25   otherwise routing the search request to a second server.

13.   A method as in claim 12, wherein the determining step includes the step of analyzing the search request to identify one or more items of routing data.

30   14.   A method as in claim 13, wherein the determining step further includes the step of searching a routing database with the identified one or more items of routing data to identify one or more databases to which the search request should be routed.

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15. A method as in claim 12, wherein the second server is remotely located from the first server.

16. A method as in claim 12, wherein the step of routing the search request to the one or more databases further includes the step of routing the search request to an update database having a plurality of records updating one or more of the database.

17. A method as in claim 16, further comprising the step of merging the search results returned from the one or more databases with the search results returned from the update database.

18. A method as in claim 12, further comprising the step of routing the search request by the second server to the one or more databases accessible by the second server.

19. A method as in claim 18, further comprising the step of returning to the first server the results of the search obtained as a result of the routing of the search request by the second server to the one or more databases accessible by the second server.

20. A system for routing search requests comprising:
    a first server having one or more databases accessible for searching;
    a second server having one or more databases accessible for searching;
    the first server capable of receiving a search request and determining whether the search request should be routed to the one or more databases accessible by the first server or to a second server;
    the first server routing the search request to the one or more databases accessible by the first server when the search request is determined that it should be routed to the one or more databases accessible by the first server; and
    otherwise the first server routing the search request to the second server.

21. A system as in claim 20, further comprising a routing database.

22. A system as in claim 21, wherein the routing database is searched using one or more items of routing data in the search request to identify one or more databases to which the search request should be routed.

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23.   A system as in claim 20, wherein the second server is remotely located from the first server.

24.   A system as in claim 20, wherein the second server routes the search request to the one or more databases accessible by the second server.

25.   A system as in claim 24, wherein the second server returns the results of the search obtained as a result of the routing of the search request to the one or more databases accessible by the second server.

26.   A system as in claim 20, further comprising an update database having a plurality of records updating one or more of the database.

27.   A system as in claim 26, wherein the first server routes the search request to the update database in addition to the one or more databases.

28.   A system as in claim 27, wherein the first proxy servers merges the search results returned from the one or more databases with the search results returned from the update database.

29.   A method of routing search requests comprising the steps of:
     establishing a routing database identifying one or more databases that are appropriate to search in response to a search request;
     establishing one or more default routes that are appropriate to search in response to a search request;
     receiving a search request;
     searching the routing database to determine routes to one or more databases that are appropriate to search in response to a search request;
     if the search of the routing database is successful, routing the search request to a database identified by the routing database; and
     in other instances, routing the search request to a database identified by one or more default routes.

30.   A method as in claim 29, further comprising the step analyzing the search request to identify one or more items of routing data.

31.   A method as in claim 30, wherein the searching step further includes the step of searching a routing database with the identified one or more items of routing data to identify one or more databases to which the search request should be routed.

32.   A method as in claim 29, wherein the routing databases identifies routes to one or more databases that are appropriate to search in response to a search request.

33.   A method as in claim 29, wherein the search request is routed to a database identified by the one or more default routes if the search request does not include a field that is used for routing.

34.   A method as in claim 29, wherein the search request is routed to a database identified by the one or more default routes if the search request includes a field that is used for routing but the field is empty.

35.   A method as in claim 29, wherein the search request is routed to a database identified by the one or more default routes if the search request includes a field that is used for routing but the data populating the field does not correspond to any entries in the routing database.